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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Thursday, March 2, 1933 16 1853 ★
U. S. D. A. Bureau of Agriculture

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Subject: "Housekeepers' Questions." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics and the Bureau of Entomology, U.S.D.A.

--ooOoo--

We haven't had a question day for some time, have we? But the questions have been pouring in just the same. So let's dedicate today to answering them--a few of them, at least.

Though Lent has only just begun, already requests are arriving for Lenten menus and recipes, especially economical Lenten dishes. Many systematic housekeepers I know keep a section of their recipe file reserved for this season of the year. Think how handy a collection of Lenten recipes is for the busy housewife. When she starts planning her March and April menus, all she has to do is to turn to her recipe file where she has recipes for cheese dishes; hearty vegetable dishes--especially those made of beans, peas or lentils; egg dishes; fish dishes and many other good main dishes for meatless meals.

That reminds me of a delicious cheese dish recently invented by the Recipe Lady. It is called cheese tomato fondue and makes an excellent main dish either for a lunch or a dinner. By the way, this is the recipe I promised you last week. It's a good one for your Lenten collection. Easy to make, nourishing, inexpensive and delicious in flavor. Have you a pencil handy? If you have, I'll take time right now to give you this short recipe before I go on to the other questions.

Cheese tomato fondue, spelled F-O-N-D-U-E, calls for just seven ingredients:

1 and 1/2 cups of canned tomato juice	1 tablespoon of butter or other fat
1 cup of fine, dry bread crumbs	1/2 pound of American cheese
1 teaspoon of salt, and	4 eggs
Paprika	

I'll repeat those seven ingredients. (Repeat.)

First, heat the tomato juice, the bread crumbs and the fat in a double boiler. Then flake the cheese and add it to the hot mixture. Stir until the cheese has melted. Add this to the well-beaten egg yolks. Fold the hot mixture into the stiffly beaten egg whites containing the salt and paprika. Pour into a greased baking dish and bake in a very moderate oven, about 300 degrees F. for about one hour--or until it is set in the center. Serve it immediately.

Why the "very moderate oven?" Because both cheese and egg mixtures require low heat for cooking.

There's one good meatless main dish. Tomorrow I'll give you another--fried oysters. And from time to time during the next six weeks I'll have

other new and interesting dishes for your recipe collection.

The second question on the program today is about the little insects that get in dried fruits. One housekeeper writes: "Why do we find worms or bugs so often, even in Grade A dried fruits, and what can we do about it?"

I'll let the specialists in Entomology answer that question. Here's what they say:

"Dried fruits are frequently infested by the so-called Indian meal moth, an insect that at one time or another finds its way into every home. It is a common pest not only of dried fruits but also of nut meats, cereals, crackers and flour. During the summer months it often comes into the home in an infested package of foodstuff. The moths develop in the infested package and then fly all over the pantry laying their eggs in all other open packages of food. The eggs hatch into the worms or caterpillars that do the actual feeding. Frequently these insects are not discovered until every exposed foodstuff becomes contaminated. Since dried fruit is one of the favorite foods of this insect, it is quickly attacked when exposed. Sometimes packages of dried fruit left too long on grocery shelves become infested by moths that fly from one infested food to another."

What to do when you find these insects in your home? The specialists advise first making a thorough search to discover all the foods that are wormy. Destroy all food that is heavily infested. Food only slightly attacked you can sterilize by heating in the oven for a short period. Sift the finer cereals and flour to remove the insects before heating. You can remove the insects from coarse cereals by hand. This is another situation where prevention is better than cure. Better to keep out the insects than to get rid of them after they have attacked food. So put your dried fruits, cereals, nutmeats and crackers in tight glass jars or cans as soon as they come from the grocery.

Question number three is about color and vitamins. One lady asks whether color in a vegetable is any indication of the vitamin content. Yes, scientists have discovered in recent years a relation between color and vitamins in some vegetables. For example, take that good vegetable the carrot. The yellow of the carrot shows that vitamin A is present. You see the yellow is due primarily to a pigment known as carotene. Wherever this pigment occurs, either vitamin A is present or the carotene is changed in the body to vitamin A. One way or another you get a supply of this valuable vitamin that helps you resist infections, if you eat yellow vegetables. The scientists say that yellow vegetables like sweetpotatoes, pumpkin, yellow corn and yellow turnips are better sources of vitamin A than white potatoes, white corn and white turnips.

By the way, carrots are valuable for other reasons than for their vitamin A content. They are also a rich source of vitamins B and C. Carrots are an important and cheap protective food, so use them often during winter and early spring if you are planning inexpensive meals for your family.

Tomorrow: "An Oyster Dinner."

